

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of identifying a subscriber's local service provider in response to a telephone call from the subscriber to a called party, the method comprising:
 - receiving a request from a customer for the identity of the subscriber's local service provider;
 - determining which of a plurality of databases to query;
 - determining a message type to send to the database selected in response to the first determination; and
 - launching a query to the selected database.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the determining of message type is based upon a cost associated with each of a plurality of available message types.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the determining of message type is based upon the message type supported by each of the plurality of databases.
4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving a response from the selected database that was queried.
5. The method according to claim 4, further comprising formatting and sending a response to the customer.
6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the launching further comprises launching a query to one of the plurality of databases prior to the telephone call being connected to the called party.
7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the launching further comprises launching a query to one of the plurality of databases during the pendency of the telephone call.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the launching further comprises launching a query to one of the plurality of databases after the telephone call has been disconnected.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of databases comprises a line information database.

10. A method of identifying a subscriber's local service provider in response to a telephone call from the subscriber to a called party, the method comprising:

receiving a request from a customer for the identity of the subscriber's local service provider;

determining a message type in which to query a database based at least on a cost associated with each of a plurality of message types; and

launching a query to one of a plurality of databases based upon the determination.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the determination is further based upon the message type supported by each of the plurality of databases.

12. The method according to claim 10, further comprising receiving a response from the queried database.

13. The method according to claim 12, further comprising formatting and sending a response to the customer.

14. The method according to claim 10, wherein the launching further comprises launching a query to one of the plurality of databases prior to the telephone call being connected to the called party.

15. The method according to claim 10, wherein the launching further comprises launching a query to one of the plurality of databases during the pendency of the telephone call.

16. The method according to claim 10, wherein the launching further comprises launching a query to one of the plurality of databases after the telephone call has been disconnected.

17. The method according to claim 10, wherein at least one of the plurality of databases comprises a line information database.

18. A system for identifying a subscriber's local service provider associated with a telephone call from the subscriber to a called party, the system comprising:

a gateway that receives a request from a customer to ascertain the identity of the subscriber's local service provider, the gateway being able to determine one of a plurality of message types in which to query one of a plurality of databases.

19. The system according to claim 18, wherein the gateway determines the message type based upon a cost associated with each available message type.

20. The system according to claim 18, wherein the gateway determines the message type based upon a message type supported by each of the plurality of databases.

21. The system according to claim 18, wherein the request is received prior to the telephone call being connected to the called party.

22. The system according to claim 18, wherein the request is received during the pendency of the telephone call.

23. The system according to claim 18, wherein the request is received after the telephone call has been disconnected.

24. The system according to claim 18, wherein at least one of the plurality of databases comprises a line information database.

P23661.S04

25. A computer readable medium for identifying a subscriber's local service provider in response to a telephone call from the subscriber to a called party, the computer readable medium comprising:

a receiving source code segment that receives a request from a customer for the identity of the subscriber's local service provider;

a determining source code segment that determines a message type to query a database based on a cost associated with each of a plurality of message types; and

a launching source code segment that launches a query to one of a plurality of databases.

26. The system according to claim 25, wherein at least one of the plurality of databases comprises a line information database.